

Reflections and Challenges

Reflexiones y desafíos

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Most of this particular year has already passed; however, we are still looking forward to transcendental events in which definitions will significantly modify our future life.

The pandemic has not yet reached its peak because, although the curve has flattened –even with a timid decline in Buenos Aires and stability in the outskirts–, there has been an explosion inside the country that has reached a critical level in some provinces.

The number of overall infected cases continues to grow, and so does the number of deaths, reaching a high level on the global comparative scale.

At the same time, the national economic crisis has severely worsened, with unprecedented reduction in activities on the one hand, and a disturbing increase in poverty and unemployment rates on the other.

Argentina is at a crossroads that constitutes a challenge for the government and the society to reach an agreement and build a reasonable future of growth and prosperity.

It is impossible to avoid commenting on social reality without referring to this extremely difficult framework in which the level of uncertainty causes generalized anxiety, in addition to the physical and emotional fatigue that is evident in the population in general and in health workers in particular.

The Argentine Society of Cardiology has been working very hard since my last communication until the first days of October, when I am writing this fifth letter.

I noticed that this exceptional crisis offered scope for developing new skills, conditions and attitudes that will be part of a new cultural wealth, and will probably remain as a positive balance despite the general damage caused by the situation.

The breakdown of geographical barriers is what most strikes me. Distance has disappeared at the local, national or international level. Even time zone

differences have been easily solved: for example, at the e-Space congress I had the opportunity to attend a leadership table of about twenty representatives from the five continents, simultaneously exchanging ideas and experiences, and proposing future courses of action.

Another positive legacy is that most prejudices and fears were eliminated, and horizontal exchange was facilitated with fewer inhibitions and alignment of imaginary “ranges” of any kind of positions. The dialogue was between peers, regardless of country or point of origin.

A new added quality was teamwork as an assimilation that turned out to be indispensable. We have largely learned to support and trust each other, to be more dependent, to avoid “talking over” one another, according to who shouts the loudest. We learned a lot more about respecting our turns.

At the level of the general population, I believe that these multi-society campaigns with a common warning message encouraging consultation, care and prevention, have revalued the medical profession and the healthcare team in their corresponding dimensions.

Not only we –doctors– but also those who govern us are more aware of the role we all play in the social structure.

We notice with pleasure that, while we are cardiologists, super-specialists, we are doctors first and foremost, and we have returned to epidemiological, health and general medicine roles that we imperceptibly assume, without pretending to take the place of others.

We have also learned to be resilient in the face of adversity, to work tirelessly and in solidarity –perhaps as never before– for the common good.

Until next time.

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President of the Argentine Society of Cardiology